

State Papers Ireland 1509-1782

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Records elsewhere
3. Contents
4. Arrangement
5. Published calendars
6. Other series in the calendars
7. Converting items in the calendars into modern references
8. Unpublished calendars
9. Further reading

1. Introduction

The State Papers are the official archives of the Secretaries of State from the reign of Henry VIII to c. 1782. Mainly letters, both from officials and private individuals, they also include reports and memoranda, proposals and treatises, working papers and private papers, accounts of royal revenues and possessions and cover practically every aspect of government. They are of unique significance for Irish history as most Irish records of the Dublin Castle administration before 1790 were destroyed in the burning of the Public Record Office of Ireland in 1922. Similar material for earlier periods may be found in other record groups and classes, notably Ancient Correspondence in **SC 1**.

The State Papers Ireland are seen on microfilm.

2. Records elsewhere

Many secretaries of state, such as Burghley under Elizabeth I and Cecil under James I, took with them into retirement many state papers that came to be incorporated into their own private collections, now housed outside The National Archives. By the end of the 17th century, much significant correspondence that "ought" to be with the state papers is as likely to be with the private collections of leading politicians and senior officials. The Historical Manuscripts Commission, The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU may be able to advise you on the current location of such papers. The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has published several volumes of calendars of such papers of senior officials and lords lieutenant of Ireland in *Eighteenth Century Irish Official Papers in Great Britain* 2 vols. (Belfast, 1973, 1990).

3. Contents

State Papers Ireland contain despatches from the crown's representative in Ireland - the Lord Deputy or Lord Lieutenant, his council and other officials, sometimes containing copies of letters and petitions sent to them by soldiers, officials, Irish chiefs and private individuals; drafts and minutes of answers made to such despatches; accounts of expenditure or requests for funds; instructions sent out to officials; projects for English colonisation or establishing new trades and

industries; reports on the state of Ireland.

4. Arrangement

State Papers Ireland are now arranged chronologically in the record classes **SP 60** (1509-1547); **SP 61** (1547-1553); **SP 62** (1553-1558) and **SP 63** (1558-1782). Originally they were probably arranged by subject or individual correspondent, as described in an early 17th century list in **SP 45/20**. Re-arrangement and re-binding into a single chronological sequence was the work of the early 19th century State Paper Office, preparatory to the publication of its calendars. This chronological re-arrangement was carried so far that enclosures would be separated from their accompanying letter to be placed in correct date order.

5. Published calendars

The *Calendars of State Papers Ireland* cover the period 1509-1670 and then continue in the main series of *Calendars of State Papers Domestic* up to 1704, when this printed series ends. The early published calendars, up to 1585, are regarded as defective on account of the brevity of their entries and the inaccuracy of place-name and personal name identification. They are to be replaced by a completely new edition, the first volume of which has been published - *Calendar of State Papers Ireland, Tudor Period, 1571-5*.

From 1760-1775 the State Papers Ireland are included in the *Calendars of Home Office Papers*. For 1715-1760, there are typescript calendars of **SP 63** held by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Documents relating to Ireland for the reign of Henry VIII are included in the *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the reign of Henry VIII*. Calendars of documents in **SP 1** and **SP 2** can be searched using *State Papers Online* and *British History Online*, available on the public computers at The National Archives.

6. Other series in the calendars

There are supplementary series of oversize documents in **SP 65** for the period 1535-1707, which include valuations of Irish monasteries dissolved by Henry VIII, accounts and proceedings of the Commissioners for Claims in Munster in 1588 (see also **PRO 30/34/14**) and in **SP 66**, both included in the printed calendars. Maps of Ireland in **SP 64** and **SP 112** are described in *Maps and Plans in the Public Record Office - British Isles* (1967) and many are also noted in the calendars. Those for 1604-1615 also draw on the 'Philadelphia Papers' in **PRO 31/8/199**, transcripts of state and private papers, mainly of the lord deputy Sir Arthur Chichester, the originals of which no longer survive. The Carew Papers in **PRO 30/5** covering 1570-1646 are not included in the calendars. **SP 63** does include some state paper material that was in private hands such as the Conway Papers and, for 1772-1776, the correspondence registers of Lord Harcourt's personal secretary, Colonel de Blaquiere, purchased in 1848. There are also oddities, such as signed petitions of 1777 from the inhabitants of Dublin against moving the Custom House in **SP 63/444** and Commonwealth accounts in **SP 63/281**.

For 1633-1670, the printed calendars also include entries from other record classes of relevance to the government of Ireland - Signet Office Letter Books in **SO 1** (which run from 1627 and are indexed separately from 1643 in **SO 3**, authorising the Lord Lieutenant to pass Letters Patent under the Great Seal of Ireland); Docquet Books, which briefly summarise King's Bills, in **SO 3** (and run from 1585); King's Bills in **SP 39** (which run from 1609-1642 and continue after 1661 in **SO 7**); Entry Books in **SP 44**; records of the Committee for Both Kingdoms in **SP 21** and Council of State in **SP 25** and oversize parchment documents in **SP 66** (referred to in the calendars as 'Case' A or B). For 1670-1704, the Calendars also contain entries from **SP 38** (Signet Office Docquets). Not included in the calendars is **SP 28** Commonwealth Exchequer Papers for 1642-1660 and most miscellaneous state paper material relating to Ireland in **SP 46**.

Entry Books of letters sent from the Secretary of State to the Irish administration are in **SP 67** for 1681-1783 with separate warrant books in the same class for 1713-1776 (before 1713 warrants were noted in the Entry Books). For the period 1661-1690, there are similar entry books in **SP 63** (**SP 63/308, 312, 318, 336, 340** and **341**). The 'entry books' in **PRO 30/26/60** mainly contain lists of civil and military offices and office-holders c. 1698-1717.

By the 18th century, it was established practice for the Lord Lieutenant's secretary to send 'public' dispatches - such as formal acknowledgements and requests or routine military matters - to the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, which was responsible for Irish affairs and for the Lord Lieutenant himself to send 'private' dispatches, often in his own handwriting, to the Secretary on policy and political issues, sometimes endorsed as 'secret and confidential' or 'most secret' and this is the correspondence now in **SP 63**.

On financial matters, the Lord Lieutenant corresponded directly with the First Lord of the Treasury and this correspondence is not included in **SP 63**, although letters to the Treasury often duplicated those to the Southern Department. It may survive with the private papers of politicians e.g. in the Chatham Papers in **PRO 30/8** and in the Cornwallis Papers in **PRO 30/11**. Correspondence with Treasury officials may be found in **T 1** and is calendared to 1745 in the *Calendar of Treasury Papers* and *Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers*. Routine matters, such as returning Irish parliamentary bills approved by the English Privy Council, King's Letters (**SO 1**, with many duplicate entries in **HO 101** from 1776) were handled by the Irish Office in London which was run by the Lord Lieutenant's personal secretary.

7. Converting items in the calendars into modern references

7.1 For the period 1509-1603

Most documents calendared in these volumes are available on microfilm as follows:

Henry VIII (1509-1547)	SP 60 and piece number
Edward VI (1547-1553)	SP 61 and piece number
Mary I (1553-1558)	SP 62 and piece number
Elizabeth I (1558-1603)	SP 63 and piece number

The piece number is the Roman numeral at the top of each page which should be converted to an Arabic numeral, except for the calendars for 1600-1603, where the roman numerals are to be found at the beginning of the section.

The item numbers, which are on the left hand side of the page and start from 1 at the beginning of each volume serve only to identify the item within the piece.

Occasional items are from other document series:

Entry Book	SP 63/204
Entry Book Ireland, Folios	SP 65/12
Ireland, Folios	SP 65
Irish Maps	SP 64
SP Dom. Eliz + volume number	SP 12 /volume number

7.2 For the period 1603-1670

Most documents calendared in these volumes are from the State Papers Ireland in **SP 63**. This is noted in the left hand margin by the entry.

Where the item is not described as SP Ireland, the reference at the side of each entry refer to the following sources:

Add (Additional) papers	SP 63/240
ACTA Regia Hibernica	Incomplete collection made by Irish Record Commission, Dublin*
BM	Dept of MSS, British Library , 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB
Carew Papers	At Lambeth Palace Library , London, SE1 7JU. (Ed) J S Brewer and W M Bullen: <i>Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts</i> (London 1887)
Carte Papers	At Bodlian Library, Oxford. Transcripts at The National Archives under reference PRO 31/1

Conway Papers	Distributed in SP 63
Docquet Book/Docquets	SP 38 +
Grant Book	SP 14/141
Hanmer Notes	SP 63/21
Ind Warrent Book	SP 14/60
Patent Roles Ireland	Dublin*
Philadelphia Papers	Dublin*. Transcripts at The National Archives under reference PRO 31/8/197 - 203
Proclamations	SP 14/187
Sign Manual	SP 39 +
Sy.W	(Unidentified)
SP Dom(estic) Entry Book	SP 44
SP Dom(estic) Inter(egnum) E	SP 21
SP Dom(estic) Inter(egnum) I	SP 14
SP Dom(estic) Proclamations	SP 14/187
Trin Coll Dublin	The Library , Trinity College, College Street, Dublin 2
Warrent Book	SP 40 +

* **The National Archives of Ireland**, Dublin. Contents largely destroyed by fire in 1922. For details of published means of reference see Herbert Wood: *A Guide to Records Deposited in the Public Records Office of Ireland* (HM Stationary Office Dublin 1919).

+ Reference number to piece of appropriate date can be found in Lists and Indexes XLIII: *State Papers Domestic* (HMSO 1914, Kraus Reprint). Within the document, use the manuscript number written on the first page of each item, not the stamped numbers nor the running foliation. The stamped numbers can be useful for quick reference if you want to take a print of the film.

8. Unpublished calendars

Amongst the Treasury papers there are two boxes of unpublished calendars to the patent and close rolls of Chancery in Ireland. **T 1/6535B** contains (a) a printed calendar of patent and close rolls (Ireland), James I, vol III, 1603 - 1610, and (b) a manuscript index of these rolls and a few grants. **T 1/6535C** contains (a) a very short printed calendar of patent and close rolls (Ireland), Charles I, vol II, covering March - May 1633, and (b) manuscript draft copies, produced in 1864, of what appear to be directives from the King to Lord Deputy Wentworth regarding the content of approximately 100 letters patent to be issued in Ireland, covering the period 1634 - 1637. There are also a some letters from prospective grantees requesting such letters patent from the King.

9. Further reading

C Brady, *The Chief Governors: rise and fall of reform government in Tudor Ireland, 1536-1588* (Cambridge University Press, 1994)

E M Johnson, *Great Britain and Ireland 1760-1800* (Oliver and Boyd, 1963)

A Prochaska, *Irish History from 1700: A Guide to Sources in the Public Record Office* (British Records Association, 1986)

D W Hayton, *Ruling Ireland, 1685-1742: politics, politicians and parties* (Boydell Press, 2004)

Guide reference: *Domestic Records Information 25*
Last updated: 7 September 2010

Downloaded from:

<http://www.national-archives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/state-papers-ireland-1509-1782.htm>